



go to cuba

MISSION TEAM HANDBOOK: CUBA



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welcome!

Thank you for choosing a Lifeline trip! At Lifeline, we want you to see how God is working around the world and to join Him there! We believe in healthy relationships and empowering partnerships, so every trip is designed in partnership with the local leaders. We work together to determine meaningful opportunities for people to experience what God is doing through Lifeline's field ministries.

There are many ways for teams to learn, participate, and serve in ministry alongside our brothers and sisters in Cuba. The primary goal in all of Lifeline's ministries is to make a kingdom impact around the world!



“

The Great Commission is not about us making something happen on the mission field, but about humbly coming alongside what God is doing in the world.

- Dr. Chris DeWelt, Ozark Christian College Director of Intercultural Studies

”

preparing for your trip

One of the most important things you can do to ensure you experience the best possible trip is to plan ahead. Please read through the handbook and know what is expected of you. Be ready to learn and participate in all of the pre and post-trip training sessions. If you have traveled on a mission trip before, we ask that you set aside any expectations, and come prepared for God to move in a new way! Another important note is that travel can be unpredictable & Lifeline trips always require flexibility, but you can eliminate many "surprises" by being well-prepared.

LIFELINE IN CUBA

Although travel to Cuba is restricted, Lifeline has had special permission to visit there for the past two decades to provide a broad spectrum of training to a variety of sectors. During that time, we've developed a close, meaningful relationship with **Campo Amor**, a youth sports foundation that includes a network of 100+ house churches spread across the island. Coaches and pastors team together to reach families in their community for Jesus.

ACCOMMODATIONS

- Accommodations will be at the Campo Amor guest house in Alomar, a neighborhood on the outskirts of Havana, Cuba. This includes 3 houses in close proximity that have been extensively renovated to provide group housing.. There are multiple rooms with bunk beds that share multiple bathrooms with hot showers, sinks and modern restrooms. Men and women are housed on different floors or houses. Families can sometimes be accommodated together in a single room depending on the number of team members during that visit.
- Bedding and towels are provided unless otherwise instructed.
- If you are a light sleeper we suggest you bring earplugs in case you have a snorer.
- Cuba uses the same electricity as the U.S. No adapter needed.
- WIFI will **not** be available for team members. You may incur a hefty phone bill if you try to use your phone for calls or internet in Cuba. The team leader will be able to communicate with US-based staff if there is an emergency.

MEALS

- Campo Amor will provide safe drinking water. Team members should bring water bottles to fill and carry with them when traveling during the day.
- Drink nothing away from the mission unless you are told it is safe. The water at the restaurants we visit is usually safe to drink. If not, Lifeline staff will inform you. Check with Lifeline Field Guides if you are uncertain.
- Most meals will be prepared by a cook in the guest house at Campo Amor. A few meals may be at local restaurants.

*Come prepared to purchase one meal in Cuba and occasional coffee or drinks in local cafes during the trip.

Food Allergies: Please inform Lifeline in advance as to the nature and severity of any food or other allergies (gluten, nut, dairy, etc.). Lifeline is unable to accommodate for food allergies, sensitivities, or preferences. In some locations we are able to provide a few gluten-free options, but we need to know well in advance. We are not able to avoid cross contamination. Participants with food allergies/sensitivities are encouraged to bring food items and snacks to supplement the meals provided.

CLOTHING/SHOES

Please abide by the following dress code. This may require you to dress differently than you are accustomed to, however, it is a way to honor and respect the community where you will be serving.

Bring seasonally appropriate, modest clothing. Think conservative and comfortable. The temperatures average between 75-90oF.

- Laundry services are not available. Bring enough clothing for the entire trip.
- For safety, please keep jewelry to a minimum.
- Bring a light jacket. It may get cool in the evenings.
- Shoes: Comfortable walking/work shoes, such as sneakers or work boots for working and walking.

WOMEN

- Ladies may wear skirts, pants, jeans, knee-length shorts or capri pants for work, recreation and shopping. No holes in jeans/capris/etc.
- No shorts.
- No yoga pants, leggings, or other tight pants. These items may only be worn in the dorms for sleeping.

Tops

- Midriff, chest, back, underwear and bra must be covered.
- Sleeveless shirts may be worn. Please no tank tops, halter tops, spaghetti straps, low necklines.

Church Services, home visits, prayer meetings, etc.

- House churches are informal, so jeans or capris are fine.

Swimwear (if swimming is included on your trip)

- Full coverage one-piece or tankini (no bare midriffs)

MEN

- Shorts or jeans may be worn for work. No holes in jeans/shorts or exposed underwear.
- For church, khaki-type pants or nice jeans and a collared shirt. No shorts.
- Shirts must be worn at all times except in the dorm.
- Tank tops or low armholes may be worn in the dorm room only.

Shoes

- Comfortable walking/work shoes, such as sneakers or work boots for working and walking. Shoes for church service.
- Flip flops/shower shoes in the dorms and shower. Flip-flops and sandals are not permitted at the worksites. Never go barefoot.

Swimwear (if swimming is included on your trip)

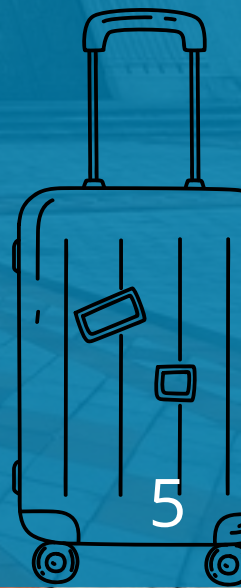
- Trunks. No Speedos!

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

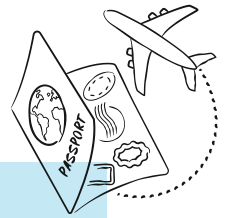
- Passport
- Refillable water bottle that can be used all week
- Bible
- Journal and pen
- Clothing & shoes (see guidelines)
- Earplugs – there might be a snorer in your dorm
- Insect repellent. (Aerosol containers must be packed in checked luggage.)
- Money:
 - Food at airports on travel days
 - Offering for approximately 2 church services
 - Souvenirs on shopping day
 - 1 meal and coffee/soft drinks while in Cuba.
- **NOTE:** Please bring currency that is clean, no tears or marks. If possible, bring a variety of denominations (\$20 & smaller). They will not exchange bills that have marks or are torn.
- Personal medications (pack in carry-on bag)
- Photo ID, such as driver's license (optional)
- Sleepwear
- Snacks for your personal use
- Sunglasses, sunscreen, & lip balm
- Toiletries (toothbrush, shampoo, etc.)

Most over the counter medications (tylenol, ibuprofen, antacids, cold/flu, allergies, etc.) are NOT available in Cuba. We encourage teams to bring basic health supplies such as:

- Band-aids and Neosporin
- Imodium
- Tylenol; Advil
- Pepto Bismol
- Benadryl (for an allergic reaction)
- Ciprofloxacin (prescription; for diarrhea)
- Electrolyte



FLIGHT INFORMATION



All teams are responsible for purchasing their own plane tickets to and from the mission location. Before purchasing plane tickets, you must confirm the itinerary with the Lifeline team.

Cuba Airport: José Martí international Airport (HAV)
Arrival/Departure Time frame: Anytime.**

**By the request of the Lifeline Field Leaders, please make every effort for your entire team to arrive and depart on the same flight or within an hour of each other. We are not able to accommodate you if you do not arrive/depart within the given time frame. If you would like to use a travel agent, we recommend High Point Travel. We have partnered with High Point for many years, and they will take good care of you. Our main contact is amada@highpointgo.com

Reminder: Flights need to fall within certain arrival and departure times. Refer to your contract for these times and airports. Contact us at missiontrips@lifeline.org if you have questions.

TRIP INSURANCE

Teams may purchase their own short-term medical/evacuation insurance if desired. We recommend working with Adam Bates of Insurance Services of America.

During an international crisis, the Department of State helps US citizens primarily in the form of providing safety information and travel warnings. We encourage US citizens traveling abroad to enroll in the Department's **Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)**, which will send you critical information if a crisis develops. But be warned: the Department's ability to help you out of a jam overseas is very limited.

For example, the Department of State does not pay for hospital emergencies and won't cover additional hotel or travel expenses if your trip is interrupted. It cannot replace lost or stolen luggage, and it offers no assistance if your trip is canceled.

Very rarely does the Department provide evacuation assistance. But there's a major "catch": you must promise to pay the transportation expenses! And since Uncle Sam doesn't do anything cheaply, going this route could put quite a dent in your pocketbook.

Thankfully, an international health insurance policy from Insurance Services of America (ISA) can cover the costs of a private medical evacuation.

For more information regarding the services the Department of State offers, please visit: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/emergencies/what-state-dept-can-cant-do-crisis.html>

For further clarification, please contact Adam Bates at adam@missionaryhealth.net

DOCUMENTS/REQUIREMENTS

Minimum age is 12 years old.

A **Passport** is required to enter Cuba. **Passport must not expire within least six months of your travel date** or you will be denied travel by the airlines. If applying for a new passport allow 4-8 weeks to receive it.

A **Religious Visa** will be secured by Lifeline through the Cuban government. **All team members must submit a picture of the photo page of their passport along with their 1st trip contribution. These deadlines are firm in order to receive the religious visas on time! These photos should be emailed to susan.hammond@Lifeline.org.**

Travel to Cuba is limited by many USA regulations. All visitors to Cuba are subject to local laws as well. This unique visa gives you permission to do all missionary activity (Bible teaching, home visits, humanitarian work, etc.). It is NOT the typical tourist visa. Lifeline has a good reputation with the Cuban government because we follow their rules & respect their authority. While the political tensions between the USA & Cuba have been hot & cold, Lifeline's teams have ALWAYS had a warm welcome and a positive experience.

Online Application: Your team leader has a link to this form. All team members MUST complete ASAP (including returning mission team participants).

Background Check: For the safety and security of the children we minister to and members of visiting teams, Lifeline requires a criminal background check for all short-term mission trip participants age 18 and older. This service is provided by Choice Screening, who specializes in conducting background checks for volunteers in full compliance with applicable state and federal laws and guidelines, including the Fair Credit Reporting Act.

- If a team member has already had a background check within 2 years of travel date, the check will not need to be run again. However, they must provide a letter stating what tests were run. Please send to sandy.gleason@lifeline.org as soon as possible.

Parental Consent: All minors (under age 18) not accompanied by a parent, must have a signed, notarized parental authorization. This document must include parental permission to leave the country. If neither parent is traveling with the child, an adult on the team must be designated to act on behalf of the parents in case of emergency or sickness/accident. You can download and print [this form](#). The form will need to be notarized and carried with the adult responsible for the minor.

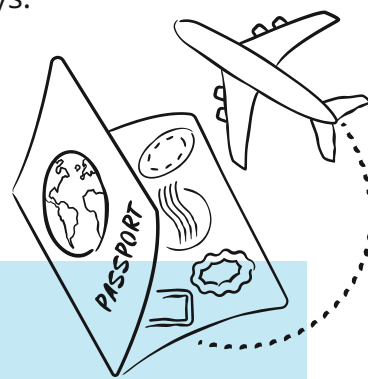
Requirements to enter/exit the country

Check the U.S. State Dept. website [Travel.State.Gov](https://travel.state.gov) for current requirements.

Health Care Teams Only: Licensure Verification

All Health Care Professionals must have licensure verification prior to serving on a medical team. This may be done in one of two ways.

1. Individuals may provide Lifeline with a hard copy of professional license before the scheduled trip date.
2. Lifeline will verify licensure via an online database prior to the trip.



IMMUNIZATION/HEALTH INFORMATION

There are no immunizations required by Lifeline, the U.S. government or the country of Cuba. Lifeline encourages everyone to **seek professional advice** from their physician or international travel clinic to determine which immunizations are recommended for your personal health needs.

If you have medication you must take regularly or over the counter medications that you prefer, be certain to bring it with you (packed in your carry-on bag).



OTHER THINGS YOU **NEED TO KNOW**

All Lifeline trip participants must abide by Lifeline's policies, respect Lifeline's doctrinal position and do nothing to act contrary to or against the mission beliefs. Our primary objective is to honor Christ and reflect his image to everyone we come into contact with.

INFORMATION PACKET

A **Final Information Packet** will be emailed to you approximately 10-14 days prior to your departure. Included will be a tentative schedule, devotion schedule, last minute information, etc.

GIFT GIVING POLICY

Please note that Lifeline has a strict “no-giving” policy. While it can feel natural to want to meet immediate needs by giving money or goods directly, we’ve learned that sustainable impact comes through relationships, not handouts.

Rather than distributing gifts, we encourage you to invest in building authentic relationships based on mutual learning, understanding, and trust. When material gifts are given directly, it can unintentionally create dependency, damage dignity, or disrupt local relationships and community dynamics. Our goal is to come alongside communities in ways that empower, not enable, and to support long-term growth led by local leaders.

Therefore, no cash or personal gifts should be given to anyone during your trip. If you feel led to give or support, please talk with your Lifeline Field Guides first. They can help you find appropriate, impactful ways to invest in the ministry—such as contributing to community projects or long-term development initiatives—ensuring your generosity aligns with local needs and Lifeline’s mission.

If team members want to leave extra supplies from trainings or other activities, then these items will be given to the country director to distribute at their discretion.

GIFTS IN KIND (GIK)

Please do not bring items that have NOT been specifically requested by the Lifeline Trips Team. This ensures that all supplies are truly needed and that local leaders have ownership in how they are used.

For items that have been specifically requested from the field—for example, supplies for sports camps, or medical outreach, etc.—[please complete the Gift in Kind \(GIK\) form](#). This form allows you to list any purchased or donated ministry items you plan to take to the mission field (for example: craft materials, sports equipment, or healthcare items). Completing this form helps Lifeline remain transparent and compliant with IRS requirements for tracking donated goods.

Whenever possible, please complete the GIK form before your trip. This helps our team coordinate logistics and make sure your contributions have the greatest positive impact.

TEAM DEVOTIONS

Each day the team will gather together for a devotion time and to debrief the day. Each team member is expected to prepare and share a brief devotional thought with the team. Your scheduled day will be listed in the final packet. This is a time to share an encouraging word, scripture, or simply what God is doing in your life right now. This is one of our favorite parts of the trip and a great way to get to know each other better! If you have questions, please reach out to your team leader so they can assist you.



SUBSTANCE USE POLICY

Use of the following **will not** be permitted at any time during your Lifeline trip.

- Alcoholic beverages
- Tobacco, including e-cigarettes, vapes, medical marijuana, and chewing tobacco. Smoking cessation products **are** permitted (ex. Patch, gum, etc.),
- Illicit drugs
- The possession of drugs is considered a major crime in countries where we serve, including medical marijuana.

TRIP PHOTO/SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

Many Cubans have phones and enjoy taking pictures just like we do. It is important and fun to take pictures of the beautiful people and places you discover in Cuba so that you can remember your experience, build lasting friendships, and continue to pray for the people you meet.

However, **the ministry has asked that you DO NOT POST ANY PICTURES ONLINE OR ON SOCIAL MEDIA. EVER!** Doing so may have a negative impact on the individuals in your photos as well as the ministry in Cuba.

This may seem severe or even ridiculous to ask of you. Please, don't take it lightly. The negative consequences of unintentionally communicating the wrong thing far outweighs any satisfaction you might get from a few "likes" on social media. Feel free to show your pictures to friends & family, but please do not don't post them online.

If you have more questions, feel free to speak to your team leaders or a Lifeline staff member.

CHILD PROTECTION GUIDELINES

Please review and read our [Child Protection Guidelines](#). Ensuring the safety of everyone on our Lifeline trips is of utmost importance. Familiarizing yourself with these guidelines is essential for maintaining a safe environment for all participants.

LOSSES

Lifeline Christian Mission and/or its employees or volunteers are not responsible for loss suffered due to illness, accident, injury or theft which may occur at any time in relation to your trip. We do everything possible to prevent these incidents, however, despite our efforts they sometimes occur.

CURRENCY IN CUBA

If you wish to exchange money, you may need to go to a bank. Some businesses may accept US dollars but the exchange rate for Cuban pesos varies greatly. Your Field Guide will work with our Cuban friends to work out the best exchange rate for you.

NOTE: Currency must be clean and crisp with no tears or marks. If possible, bring a variety of denominations (\$20 & smaller).

Money will be needed for:

- Church service - offering
- Shopping Day - souvenirs, one meal, snacks, public restrooms

COMMUNICATION WHILE IN CUBA

Internet access is not easily available in Cuba. Most USA phone carriers do not have plans that include Cuba. You may be able to make phone calls or send texts when at the retreat center but it can be very expensive.

CULTURAL AWARENESS IN CUBA

[Click here](#) for an article on Cultural Awareness in Cuba

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

U.S. Contacts

- Lifeline Christian Mission (U.S.): 614-794-0108
Monday – Friday 9am – 5 pm ET
- Susan Hammond, Director, Mission Trips: 859-553-6638

U.S. Embassy in Cuba

Address: Calzada between L & M, Vedado / Havana, Cuba

PHONE: (53)(7) 839-4100

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Lifeline Christian Mission considers the monies received for mission trips to be tax-deductible donations, therefore, contributions are **non-refundable**. Please Note: Trip credit will not be given if someone drops from the team within 30 days of the trip.

Includes

- Lodging and most meals in the mission field
- Transportation in Cuba including airport pick-up and drop off
- Translators
- Background checks
- Supporting services

Additional Expenses

- **Cost of Airfare**, hotel, if needed, & meals on travel days
- **Flight interruption costs**, such as hotel, meals, tips, etc., during travel to/from the mission or expenses incurred as a result of canceled flights, delays or missed flights for any reason.
- **Checked baggage fees**
- All costs related to extended stay for **any** reason.
- You may be asked to purchase one meal at a restaurant while in the field.

CANCELLATION PROCEDURES

Refunding trip donations: Due to the nature of tax-deductible donations, Lifeline Christian Mission (LCM) is unable to refund donations made for trip purposes. Trip donations may be designated for another Lifeline ministry or used for a future trip with Lifeline. Funds used for a future trip must be used within one year of the original trip date. **Please Note:** Trip credit will not be given if someone drops from the team within 30 days of the trip.

common **spanish** words and phrases

Good morning **¡Buenos días!** (BWAY-nos DEE-as)

Good evening **¡Buenas tardes!** (BWAY-nas TAR-des)

Hello **Hola!** (O-la)

How are you? **¿Cómo estás?** (KOH-moh ehs TAHS)

I'm fine, thanks **Estoy bien ¡Gracias!** (eh-STOY bee-en, GRA-see-as)

Thank you **Gracias** (GRAH-see-as)

You're welcome! **¡De nada!** (de NA-dah)

My name is... **Me llamo ...** (Meh YAH-mah); **Mi nombre es...**(mi NOM-bray es ...)

What's your name? **¿Cómo se llama?** (KOH-moh say yah-mah)

Yes / No / OK **Si** (see)/ **No** (no)/ **OK** (OH-keh)

Please **Por favor** (por-fah-VOR)

Excuse me (to get past) **¡Perdone!** (per-DON-ay)

Sorry (for a mistake) **Lo siento** (lo see EN-toh)

Goodbye **Adiós** (ah-dee-OS)

Goodnight **¡Buenas noches!** (bway-nas no-ches)

See you later **¡Hasta luego!** (AS-ta loo-AY-go)

See you tomorrow **¡Hasta mañana!** (AS-ta man-YAN-a)

I don't understand. **No entiendo.** (NOH ehn-TYEHN-doh)

Do you speak English? **¿Hablas inglés?** (AB-las in-glAYs)

I don't speak Spanish. **No hablo español.** (noh AH-bloh ehs-pah-NYOHL)

Where is the bathroom? **¿Dónde está el baño?** (DON-day es-TAH el BAN-yo)

The Trip is Just the Beginning!

It is our joy to come alongside our local leaders in ministry, encourage them, and see the difference that they are making in the kingdom! They are on mission to make a great impact in their communities.

Our goal is that each person on the trip will be inspired to join God on mission, too! We believe that each person is called to bring hope into their own homes and communities. How lives will be sparked on mission by God will be different for each person; but, God invites us to join Him on mission wherever that may be. We pray that Short-Term Mission Trip Experiences will be fertile ground for God to prepare His people for mission abroad, but also in their own homes, jobs, and communities.